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John Muir

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TELLS OF GLORIES OF HETCH HETCHY

John Muir Would Save Wonder Valley.

NATURALIST APPEALS TO AMERICAN PEOPLE

**Says Its Destruction as a Scenic
Marvel Is Threatened by Water
Supply Plan—His Description of
Its Beauties.**

Urging that the general public help save the famous Hetch Hetchy valley in California, which is threatened with destruction, because Los Angeles would use it in a water supply system, John Muir, the naturalist, has issued the following appeal:

"To the American People—For the preservation of this valley we make this public appeal in the belief that the people will not sit idly by while a municipality, that admits it can obtain sufficient water from several other sources by paying a little more, is trying to destroy and convert to its own uses the wonderful Hetch Hetchy Valley in the Yosemite National Park by cutting down its magnificent groves of nature's own planting and burying its gardens and laws 200 feet deep for a water tank.

"This destructive scheme is embodied in a bill introduced by Congressman Raker, of California, and desperate efforts are being made to rush it through Congress before anything like the full, wide-open hearing the far-reaching importance of the subject demands can be had. Repeated appeals have been made to the Public Lands Committee of the House of Representatives for postponement of a full hearing until December, in order that evidence now in preparation may be presented. But the committee has closed the hearings.

"The Garfield grant, made five years ago upon the representation that there were no adequate alternative sources, provided for the development of the Lake Eleanor source to its fullest capacity before taking Hetch Hetchy. Under overwhelming public protest an Army Board was appointed to ascertain whether there were any adequate sources of supply outside of the Yosemite National Park. The first and main conclusion reached by the Advisory Board of Army Engineers was as follows:

"The board is of the opinion that there are several sources of water supply that could be obtained and used by the city of San Francisco and adjacent communities to supplement the nearby supplies as the necessity develops. From any one of these sources the water is sufficient in quantity and is, or can be made, suitable in quality, while the engineering difficulties are not insurmountable. The determining factor is principally one of cost.

"Upon this showing Secretary Fisher denied the city's request for Hetch Hetchy Valley.

"San Francisco has now abandoned all claims that there are no adequate alternative supplies and demands from Congress the one greatest natural wonder on whose account the Tuolumne half of the park was established. Will comparative cheapness constitute a valid excuse in the eyes of the nation and the world for the invasion of Yosemite National Park and the destruction of one of its two greatest scenic features?"

"The Raker bill asks for rights of way through the park for the construction and maintenance of aqueducts, etc., for use of materials from public lands adjacent to the right of way, for the construction and operation of power plants, tramways, and railroads and other means of transportation that may be necessary. Among the sanitary rules is one prohibiting bathing, washing, or watering of stock in any of the streams within a mile of Hetch Hetchy.

"The sanitary rules are sure to be found inadequate, for most cities now exclude all persons from their watersheds under severe penalties. Among the 'simple rules' deemed satisfactory by the Freeman report to guard the water supply against pollution are those of Portland, Ore.

"But the truth is that nine years after the Oregon Bull Run reservation was established the city again applied to Congress and secured the passage of a Federal statute providing \$500 fine for any one caught trespassing on the watershed, or even driving a domestic animal into it. This is an illustration of what may happen in the Yosemite Park, excluding all visitors from the five hundred square miles, or more than half of its entire area."

"Hetch Hetchy is a grand valley like the Yosemite in the northwest part of the Yosemite Park, discovered in 1850, the year before the discovery of Yosemite, when the Digger Indians held possession of it as a sort of wheat field and acorn orchard.

"I have always called it the Tuolumne Yosemite, for it is a wonderfully exact counterpart of the great Merced Yosemite, not only in its beautiful river and sublime rocks and waterfalls, but in the gardens, groves and meadows of its flowery, park-like floor. The floor of Yosemite is about 4,000 feet above the sea, the Hetch Hetchy floor about 3,700; the walls of both are of gray granite, rise abruptly out of the flowery grass and groves, are sculptured in the same style, and in both every rock is a glacial monument.

"Standing boldly out from the south wall is a strikingly picturesque rock called Kolana by the Indians, the outermost of a group 2,300 feet high, corresponding with the Cathedral Rocks of Yosemite both in relative position and form. On the opposite side of the valley, facing Kolana, there is a counterpart of the El Capitan of Yosemite rising to a height of 1,800 feet, and over its massive brow flows a stream which makes the most graceful fall I have ever seen.

"Its Indian name is Tueeulala. From the edge of the cliff it is perfectly free in the air for 1,000 feet, then breaks up into a ragged sheet of cascades among the boulders of an earthquake talus. It is in all its glory in June, when the snow is melting fast, but fades and vanishes toward the end of the summer.

"The only fall I know with which it may fairly be compared is the Yosemite Bridal Veil; but it excels even that favorite fall both in height and graceful beauty and behavior.

"Looking northward across the valley, you see a plain granite cliff rising abruptly out of the gardens and groves to a height of 1,800 feet, and in front of it Tueeulala burning with irised sunfire in every fiber. In the first white outburst of the stream at the head of the fall there is abundance of visible energy, but it is speedily hushed and concealed in divine repose; and its tranquil progress to the base of the cliff is like that of downy feathers.

"Now observe the fineness and marvelous distinctness of the various sun-illuminated fabrics into which the water is woven; they sift and float from form to form down the face of that grand gray rock in so leisurely and unconfused a manner that you can examine their texture, and patterns, and tones of color as you would a piece of embroidery. Near the head of the fall you see groups of booting comet-like masses, their solid white heads separate, their tails like combed silk interlacing among delicate shadows, ever forming and dissolving, worn out by friction in their rush

through the air. Most of these vanish a few hundred feet below the summit, changing to the varied forms of cloud-like drapery.

"Near the bottom the width of the fall has increased from about twenty-five to a hundred feet. Here it is composed of yet finer tissues, and is still without a trace of disorder—air, water and sunlight woven into stuff that spirits might wear.

"A short distance to the eastward of Tueeulala booms and thunders Wapama, the great Hetch Hetchy Fall, so near that you have both of them in view from the same standpoint. It is the counterpart of the Yosemite Fall, but has a much greater volume of water, is about 1,700 feet in height, and appears to be nearly vertical, though considerably inclined, and is dashed into huge outbounding bosses of foam on projecting shelves and knobs. No two falls could be more unlike—Tueeulala out in the open sunshine descending like thistledown; Wapama in a jagged, shadowy gorge roaring and thundering, pounding its way with the weight and energy of an avalanche.

"Besides this glorious pair there is a broad, massive fall on the main river a short distance above the head of the valley. Its position is sometimes like that of the Vernal in Yosemite, and its roar as it plunges into a surging trout-pool may be heard a long way, though it is only about twenty feet high. There is also a chain of magnificent cascades at the head of the valley on a stream that comes in from the northeast, mostly silvery plumes like the one between the Vernal and Nevada falls of Yosemite, half sliding, half leaping on bare glacier-polished granite, covered with crisp clashing spray into which the sunbeams pour with glorious effect.

"And besides all these a few small streams come over the walls here and there, leaping from ledge to ledge with birdlike song and watering many a hidden cliff garden and fernery, but they are too unshowy to be noticed in so grand a place.

"The floor of the Valley is about three and a half miles long and from a fourth to half a mile wide. The lower portion is mostly a dry flowery meadow about a mile long, with the trees restricted to the sides, and partially separated from the upper forested portion by a low bar of glacier-polished granite across which the river breaks in rapids."